

RABBI RICK RHEINS

ARTICLES

Looking Through a Glass Onion



What is real and what is imagined? Both are present, mixed and mixed up to form a shimmering image, ever changing, shifting, allusive and illusive. It is like looking through a glass onion and guessing what's inside.

50 years ago the Beatles released the White Album. As opposed to the tightly produced masterpieces of their earlier works, the White Album seemed to be a hodge-podge of scraps and bits assembled sloppily into a double album. In contrast to the brightly evocative covers of Sgt. Pepper's and The Magical Mystery Tour, the White Album cover was totally white and featured only a faintly embossed The BEATLES sitting off-center. Most significantly, within a year of its release, John Lennon announced he was quitting and shortly thereafter Paul filed suit to seal the split. Pundits, experts and fans weighed in, pontificating various reasons for the breakup of what is generally considered to be the most influential Rock/Pop Band in history. "Well, the evidence is right there... look at the White Album. That's not the work of a tight band. Rather, it's four soloist who can hardly stand to be in the same room with each other. They're all just doing their thing, coming and going with snide comments and bickering."

The so called experts had their way for over 50 years. Until now.

Recently, the White Album was remastered and re-released along with extra CDs which included the long sought after Esher recordings, so named because these demos were made by the Beatles at George Harrison's home in the town of Esher, in the county of Surrey, England. The recordings reveal John, Paul, George and Ringo collaborating in a joyful, playful way. They were exploring verses, harmonies, and tempo. We get a first look at now-famous songs in their infancy. Well before they went into the Abbey Road studio for the professional treatment, they sat around George's home jamming, experimenting, teasing, breaking down in laughter and creating music that a half-century later stands among their finest work. Indeed, far from just cramming in bits and rejects to fill out a dubious double album, the Esher recordings establish that they were also developing beloved songs that never made the White Album and only were released on later albums---some during their eventual solo years. And though they were exhibiting their different styles they were very much still a band. And quite a band at that!

Of course, we always knew that the music they produced during that period was extraordinary. It's just that their subsequent breakup discolored our perception. What the critics judged to be a mishmash

of dysfunction was instead a rich banquet of their maturing, unique and varied styles.

It's like looking through a glass onion, a hand-blown bottle used on ships to hold wine and brandy. Try looking through the thickly layered glass and guess what's on the inside. You might think that you know but you won't---until you take a sip and savor the contents.

The beginning of the secular New Year 2019 is yet another marker for us. It reminds of the relentless march of time and the ever quickening pace of our life journey. It may even prompt us to focus on our personal journeys, including the disappointments: goals unmet, promises unfulfilled, and moments of regret. Of course, since we know very well the context and circumstances of our lives, we just might find noble and convincing justifications for the missteps we made. And naturally, we are convinced that we have learned the lessons of those setbacks and are now "new and improved," an ever refined and refining product. But before moving too far down the pathway of 2019, let us pause to reconsider the judgements we made of other people while looking darkly though a distorted lens. Consider the quick analysis and

snap opinions we formed before fully appreciating the depth, the complexity and the context of the subject at hand. Did I misread the way that person looked at me? Did I take his comment wrong? Did I misperceive the coyness, the distance, the coolness, the flash of temper, the aloofness, the haughty attitude, the whiff of disdain? Through what lens was I seeing, hearing and feeling the encounter?

A reflective person steps back to ponder that maybe, just maybe a conclusion and an opinion was made too hastily. Note that the true gift and achievement of such reflection is the realization that the actions one took based on erroneous perceptions can be addressed and in the best of circumstances corrected and healed. As Hillel taught:

Do not separate yourself from the community; do not be certain of yourself until the day you die; do not judge another until you are in his position...and do not say: "When I have leisure I will study" ---for perhaps you'll never have that kind of leisure (Pirkei Avot 2.5).

It's never too late to discard that glass onion lens and begin seeing the world with a clearer, cleaner, sweeter, and kinder (and dare we say, a more accurate) view.

B'vrakhah,

Rick

Rabbi Rick Rheins

DATES ARE STILL AVAILABLE FOR B'NEI MITZVAH IN 2019, 2020 AND 2021

Know that it is never too late to have our children experience the life-affirming joy and pride of accomplishment by leading a service as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Each year around 60 students become Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Temple Sinai. If you have a child who will turn 13 (or older) in 2019, 2020 or 2021 and you do not yet have a reserved date for a service, please call Rabbi Rick or Rabbi Susan Rheins and we'll answer all your questions and help you find a date that works for your family.

Date selection request forms also are available in the Temple Sinai office and can be mailed directly to you.

Know that our clergy work personally with each student and his/her family to help create a memorable celebration that will bring a lifetime of blessings.

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To apply, the students must show that they have a financial need that otherwise would prevent them from attending a sleep-away summer camp. The applications will be handled confidentially by Rabbis Rick and Susan Rheins and Lori and John Spanbauer.

To apply, please complete the form by following this link:
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